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SLAVERY-LIMITATION ABANDONED

IN THEORY AND PRACTICE,

BY THE DEFENDERS OF

The Crittenden-Lecompton Compromise.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

AMERICAN ABOLITION SOCIETY.

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APPENDIX.

SINCE the preceding Report was prepared, the following corroborative testimony has come to hand. The Washington *Weekly Republican* of September 25, publishes without dissent, a "Speech of Hon. Eli Thayer, of Massachusetts, at a State Convention of the Republican party held at Worcester, September 25," in which he says:

"But I congratulate you, members of the Republican party, on being this day on the record in favor of the doctrine, (of popular sovereignty.) During the last session of Congress, you know your Representatives, without an exception, voted for this same bill which the Democracy repudiated—the Crittenden-Lecompton bill, which involved and included the doctrine of popular sovereignty. *And what man has apologized to you for his vote?* What man has inquired of you whether you approve that action or not? They know that you approve of that action, and that if they had not thus voted, you would have branded them as traitors to the party." . . . "I find there are *some* who are still inclined to adhere to the *old* opinion that it is the right and duty of Congress to legislate for the Territories."

Mr. T. contends that though they have the *right*, it is not their *duty*, because there is a better way, that is, by *emigration*, which as he observes, is not the work of legislation, which leaves a National Republican party nothing to do but to defend the Cincinnati platform of the Democratic party of 1856!

Mr. T. says a law of Congress excluding slavery from the Territories would be *a deception*, because "*it is admitted on all hands* that it would be of no binding force, except during the time that it is a Territory, and that any new State has the same right to establish Slavery within its limits that Massachusetts or Ohio has."

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SLAVERY LIMITATION ABANDONED.

THE year elapsed since the last Annual Meeting of this Society, has been, in some respects, a remarkable one. It has witnessed the more full development of the purposes of the Slave Power as exhibited in the claims and attempts of the National Administration in its favor. It has also witnessed the further declension and apparently approaching termination of that phase of political effort against the aggressions of the Slave Power, which has been based on the policy of "letting Slavery alone in the States where it already exists," and attempting to "localize and limit it" there, by preventing its further extension—a policy which has been in process of experiment for about ten years. In order to understand, properly, these two classes of operations, during the past year, we must look at them in their conflicts with each other, and in connection with those of preceding years.

HISTORY OF "NON-EXTENSION."

From the period of the Jeffersonian Ordinance of 1787, down to that of the Wilmot proviso in 1846, the idea of limiting and localizing slavery by national action had been cherished by many of our most eminent statesmen, of rival parties, but except in the first-mentioned instance, the theory had never been reduced to practice, and in the last-mentioned, the attempt had signally failed. But in 1848, a distinct political organization, known as the "Free Soil" party, and superseding the old Liberty party, commenced the enterprise afresh. At that date, the demands of the Slave Power were by no means so exorbitant as they have since become. And, at that date, the demands of the party of limitation, restriction, and non-extension were altogether in advance of what they now are. So that, while the demands of the Slave Power have been constantly advancing, the demands of the merely defensive

party have been receding. *The past year* has witnessed the extremes of these pro-slavery demands, on the one hand, and of these retreating concessions on the other.

In the year 1848, when the controversy between the Slave Power and the party of non-extension commenced, the *chief*, the *loudest* demand of the Slave Power and of the slaveholders was, to be "let alone," to be "left undisturbed, by the Northern Abolitionists," who for years had demanded the abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia and Territories, the prohibition of the Slave-trade between the States, the repeal of the Fugitive Act of 1793, had demanded this at the hands of the Government of the United States, and who, after several years of earnest discussions, were beginning, or at least preparing, (many of them,) to demand a National Abolition of Slavery in the States. The Wilmot Proviso, excluding Slavery from the conquered Mexican Territories, had passed the House of Representatives, in 1846, by a vote of 115 to 106, had been stricken out by the Senate, 31 to 21, and, at the next Session, had been dropped by the House of Representatives, 102 to 97; no less than twenty-two members being absent. It is from this high vantage-ground of Freedom over Slavery, in 1848, as compared with our present position, that the history of the "*Non-extension*" experiment is to be traced; and it is in the contrast with that period that the events of 1857–8 are to be estimated and understood. No such aggressions as the Fugitive Slave bill of 1850—the repeal of the Missouri Restriction in 1854—the reign of terror and violence in Kansas—the Dred Scott decision—the threatened revival of the African Slave-trade, and of the Federal protection of Slavery in all the States, had ever, *then*, been apprehended, or conceived of, as possible. Nor is there the slightest reason to believe that they ever would have been, had the original enterprise of abolitionists been carried straight forward, without inviting fresh invasions by the retreating policy that has been described.

The Free Soil party, displacing the Abolitionists and the Liberty party, took possession, so to speak, of the effects and estate of Freedom, in 1848, by the inventory already set down, and we now see how much of it there is left. Freedom's claim upon the Slave States was relinquished to the Slave Power, its loud demand to be "let alone" in the States where it already exists, was conceded in the first place, has been conceded ever since, and has served to secure a series of other concessions, down to the present time, till every thing is conceded, except the right of the Slave

Power, through the Federal Government, to force slavery upon States and Territories in which a majority of the "*white* citizens" have voted against its introduction.

The distinctive motto of the "Free Soil" party was, "*No more Slave States.*" Upon this was apparently engrafted, by the "Free Democracy," in 1852, the purpose to abolish Slavery in the Federal District, and to repeal the Fugitive Slave bill of 1850. But all these, including the "No more Slave States," were omitted from the "Republican" platform of 1856, and nothing was left but "Freedom in the Territories," especially those of them "once consecrated to freedom" by their location north of the Missouri Compromise line of 36° 30′, which includes Kansas. "Freedom for Kansas," by Federal intervention, was soon proclaimed to be the only plank of the platform.

Though the Administration party, controlled by the Slave Power, had professed, in its Cincinnati platform, to seek only the non-interference of the Federal Government with the Slavery question in the Territories, leaving the "sovereign" people there at liberty to adopt free or slave institutions as they might choose, yet, during the Administration of Mr. Pierce, the power of the Government, in almost every possible manner, had been exerted to prevent the people of that Territory from excluding Slavery. The Administration of Mr. Buchanan, though commencing with the strongest professions of impartiality between slavery and freedom, had soon found the pledge an impracticable one, and had begun to rival its predecessor in acts of perfidy and violence. In a letter to some citizens of Connecticut who had addressed him in behalf of the injured emigrants in Kansas, the President had declared that Slavery already existed in Kansas, under the Constitution of the United States.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE PAST YEAR.

Thus matters stood at the time of our Annual Meeting, a year ago. The Republican Senators and Representatives in Congress, though pledged, as their predecessors and themselves had previously been, to "let Slavery alone in the Slave States," and though understood to waive the question of admitting new Slave States, and every other anti-slavery issue except the one that their party had made its sole bond of union, were confidently confided in, to stand firm and uncompromisingly upon *that one.* That they could ever be persuaded, under any circumstances, or upon any condition, to vote for the admission of Kansas into the Union,

under a Constitution establishing Slavery, could not then have been believed. *That one* remaining measure of restriction, limitation, non-extension, no one supposed they could ever relinquish; for in so doing, they would evidently give up every point contended for by themselves and predecessors, in the enterprise of limiting the extension of Slavery, by action of Congress. That relinquishment has now, nevertheless, been witnessed, and the fact stands recorded upon the Journals of Congress.

How that victory was achieved by the Slave Power may be easily shown. It was done by *attempting fresh aggressions*, so outrageous and monstrous as to cast all its previous pretensions into the back ground. In this way a submission to those previous pretensions, hitherto contended against, would naturally come to be accepted as a "compromise," in order to ward off the greater outrage now feared. It had been in the use of that same stratagem that a series of similar victories had been achieved by the Slave Power, as the past history of the country, if examined, would attest. Suffice it to say, here, that the point to be gained, on the present occasion, was, the acceptance, by the Republican party, of the so-called "popular sovereignty" doctrine of the Democratic party, embodied in the Kansas Nebraska bill of 1854, and in the Cincinnati Democratic platform of 1856. This was always understood to include a denial of the power of the Federal Government to exclude Slavery from the Territories, and the right to refuse the admission of new Slave States.

As it was explicitly and exclusively against this doctrine of the pro-slavery Democracy that the "non-extension" movement, especially the "Republican" phase of it, had been rallied, and as the very gist of the contest had always turned on this one point, the Slavery party plainly saw that if the Republicans could but be once driven to give up *that*, it would be giving up *all*. How could they be thus driven? We shall see.

Up to this time, the theory and profession of the pro-slavery Democracy, as already noticed, had been to hold an even balance between slavery and freedom in the Territories, without interference for or against either. The practice under Pres. Pierce, it is true, had given the lie to these professions; and Mr. Buchanan and his Cabinet had found their promise of neutrality impossible to be kept. The time had now fully come to shift their ground, to throw off disguises, and to proclaim the supremacy of slavery under the Constitution every where. Already had this been foreshadowed by the Dred Scott decision, and by the letter of the

President already noticed. It was only to carry out the principle, and the new aggression would be inaugurated. The Republicans, true to their maxims of "compromise," would probably be driven into the trap, and give up the last remaining plank of the "non-extension" platform.

SLAVERY CLAIMS ALL THE STATES.

Accordingly the President's Annual Message, carefully prepared, no doubt for the purpose, took the initiative of the new onslaught by announcing, somewhat cautiously, the new doctrine of Federal protection to slavery, not only in the new Territories, but in the States. To understand fully his language, it becomes necessary, first, to recite a paragraph of the Lecompton Constitution for Kansas, which was then the bone of contention, and was the immediate topic under review in the President's Message. The paragraph in the Lecompton Constitution is as follows:

"The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanction, and the right of any owner of a SLAVE to such slave, and *its* increase, is the same, and as inviolable as the right of any owner of ANY property whatsoever."

No one doubts that this was an intentional denial of the right of any government, whether State, National, or Territorial, to exclude or abolish slavery. Taken in connection with the President's declaration that the Federal Constitution had carried slavery into Kansas, it amounts to a virtual affirmation of the right and duty of the Federal Government to protect slave property wherever the Federal Constitution is "the supreme law of the land," that is, throughout the whole country. Yet this is the Lecompton Constitution that the Administration had determined to force upon Kansas. By a deceptive provision, the Constitution was to be submitted to the people of Kansas, without giving them any power to vote *against* it, but only power to vote *for* it, with or without slavery. Under the auspices of the Lecompton Convention, a pretended vote of 6143 was obtained, December 21st, 1857, for the Constitution *with* slavery, and 569 for the Constitution *without* slavery, the firm and intelligent Free State men refusing to vote at all.* Of these votes, about 1200 were believed to have been cast by Missourians, and that nearly one half of the whole were

* These election returns for 21st December and 4th January, are certified by Governor Denver and the presiding officers of the Territorial Legislature. See *New-York Tribune, January 22d*, 1858.

illegal or spurious. But the Territorial Legislature took measures for securing a fair vote, January 4th, 1858, giving opportunity to vote either (1) "for the Constitution with slavery," or (2) "for the Constitution without slavery," or (3) against the Constitution. The result was "a majority against the Constitution, of 1226, the alleged pro-slavery frauds committed in Oxford, Shawnee, Kickapoo, and other places being counted." Against the Constitution about 10,000 bona fide votes were polled.*

With this view of the Lecompton Constitution itself, of the mode of submitting it to the people, and of the results of their voting, we are prepared to understand the language and bearing of the President's Annual Message while the action of the people of Kansas was pending. Said the President:

"Should the *Constitution* WITHOUT *Slavery* be adopted by the votes of the majority, the rights of property in slaves now in the Territory are reserved. The number of these is very small, but if it were greater, the provision would be equally just and reasonable. These slaves were brought into the Territory under the Constitution of the United States, and are now the property of their masters. This point has at length been finally decided by the highest judicial authority in the country, and this upon the plain principle that when a confederacy of sovereign States acquire a new Territory at their joint expense, both equality and justice demand that the citizens of one and all of them shall have the right to take into it whatever is recognized as property by the common Constitution. To have summarily confiscated the property in slaves already in the Territory, would have been an act of gross injustice, and contrary to the practice of the older States of the Union which have abolished slavery."

The President was mistaken in his facts. The Courts in Massachusetts, and the Legislatures of New-York, Pennsylvania, and the other States that abolished slavery, did so without any acknowledgment of the right of property in slaves. And the Federal Constitution (by the testimony of James Madison, and as may be seen in its own language) was carefully guarded against such recognition. But the points in this extract here to be noticed, are these: It discloses the subtlety and deception of the provision that the people of Kansas might vote for the Constitution *without* slavery, when such a vote, as construed by the President, would nevertheless have been a vote for the Constitution *with* slavery—a vote for a Constitution which plainly declares that slaveholding is a right, of which neither statutes nor Constitutions can divest any man—a sentiment clearly expressed by the President himself.

* Telegraphic dispatch, signed F. P. Stanton.—*N. Y. Tribune, January* 21.

It discloses the fact that the Administration had undertaken the task of engrafting upon our "free institutions," as a principle of constitutional exposition and national policy, the dogma that property in man, like property in horses, is a natural right, regarded as such by the Constitution, and that the Government is therefore bound to protect slave property wherever in this country it is found. It will be noticed that he bases the claim of the slaveholder in Kansas, *not* upon the laws and Constitution of the State from whence he removed, but upon "the common Constitution" of the country. So that an emigrant from Massachusetts, equally with an emigrant from Georgia, could carry slaves into Kansas, and hold them there. Such was the President's position in respect to slavery in the *Territory* of Kansas. It was not long before he ventured to advance the same doctrine in respect to *the State* of Kansas. In his special Message on Kansas and the Lecompton Constitution, he said:

"It has been solemnly adjudged by the highest judicial tribunal that slavery exists in Kansas by virtue of the Constitution of the United States. *Kansas is, therefore, at this very moment, as much a* SLAVE STATE *as Georgia or South-Carolina.* Slavery, therefore, can never be prohibited in Kansas, except through the means of a Constitutional provision, and in no other manner can this be done as promptly, if the majority of the people desire it, as by admitting her into the Union under *the present Constitution.*"

That is, under a Constitution which declares that "the right of any owner of a slave to such slave and its increase is before and higher than any Constitutional sanction." Kansas, according to the President, must first assent to this, as the shortest if not the only way to form a Constitution against slavery, and no new Constitution was authorized by its provisions until 1864.

The pretense that the people of Kansas could ever abolish slavery, under a national sanction of the President's doctrine, was a mere ruse. If the Federal Constitution had made Kansas a Slave Territory and a Slave STATE, it would keep Kansas a Slave State. And if it could do this, it could make every other State in the Union a Slave State. The principle of the Fugitive Slave Bill does this, and every enforcement of it is an exercise of the power. If the most odious feature of the Slave Code may be enforced by the Federal Government in the States, then the *whole* of the Slave Code may be. The principle of Judge Taney's opinion in the case of Dred Scott covers the entire ground. The suit of Virginia *versus* New-York, for a reversal of Judge Paine's decision, which liberated the slaves brought into the State by their master, Mr.

Lemmon, which suit is intended to be carried up to the Supreme Court of the United States, has for its sole object a Federal decision that no State can abolish slavery or exclude slaves. The proposed revival of the African slave-trade, by action of the Federal Government, (by Congress or by the Supreme Court,) looks directly to the same result; for if slaves can be imported into some of the States, and sold and held there, under Federal sanction, then they can be imported, sold, and held in *all* the States under the same sanction. The Constitution has the same power in one State as in another.

In a word, the newly-attempted aggression of the Slave Power, through the Federal Administration, was the national protection and establishment of Slavery in all the States.

THE CLAIM NOT MISUNDERSTOOD IN CONGRESS.

Thus it was understood in Congress. Said Mr. Blair of Missouri:

"It is not Kansas alone that is embraced in this conspiracy, but the whole continent upon which we live. Hateful as is the policy by which it is sought to force upon Kansas an institution abhorred by the people—hateful as are the low and mean frauds by which this policy has been pushed—hateful as are the crimes by which, for three years, that Territory has been held in subjection—still more hateful and abhorred is the *avowed purpose* of the President to apply that policy to *the whole country*—a purpose distinctly avowed in his Lecompton Message, as well as in his Letter to certain gentlemen in Connecticut. His declaration that the Constitution of the United States carries Slavery into all the Territories of the Union, and that neither Congress nor the people of the Territories can prohibit its introduction, was first promulgated by Mr. Calhoun, and, as the President says, the doctrine has finally been decided by the highest judicial tribunal in the country. The sovereignty of Congress over the Territories, and the sovereignty of the people of the Territories, are alike designed to be struck down by the Supreme Court, and the President accepts its decision. *This decision of the Supreme Court is a Lecompton Constitution for the whole country.* For, if Congress has no right to prohibit Slavery in the Territories, and if the people of the Territory have not the right, whence comes the right of the people to prohibit it, when forming a State Constitution? They can not derive the power from Congress, because the Court denies the power in Congress, nor can they derive it from the people of the Territory who do not themselves possess it. The organ of the Administration, the *Washington Union*, has boldly put forth the doctrine that a State can not abolish Slavery, deriving it logically and legitimately from the decision of the Supreme Court, and it has been rewarded for its boldness by the election of its editor to be printer of the United States Senate."

The same view had previously been taken by Hon. Israel Washburn, Representative from Maine. This gentleman had had the sagacity to foresee and predict this attempted aggression, while the

Kansas-Nebraska bill was before the House. In a speech, April 7, 1854, he said:

"The drama of non-intervention, after one performance more, will be removed from the stage forever. As we sometimes read on the bills, it is 'positively for one night only.' The Constitution carries Slavery, we are told, into the Territories, and neither Congress, nor the local Legislatures, or both combined, can restrain its march, for the Constitution is above both, is the supreme law of the land. *Ay, and carries it into all the States, for neither State laws nor State Constitutions can exclude the enjoyment of a right guarantied by the Constitution of the Federal Government.* This, sir, is the doctrine that will be vigorously pressed, if this bill is carried."

Again, June 1, 1856, Mr. Washburn said:

"Only one step more is to be taken, and that follows, logically, from the last—it is, that Slavery may exist in, and can not by any power be excluded from, the several States."

Again, in his speech on the President's Message, and the Slavery question, Dec. 10, 1857, Mr. Washburn said:

"Mr. Speaker, I object to this new-fangled and unconstitutional doctrine, not only for what it *is*, but for what it prophesies, and prepares the way for. Acquiesce in it, yield to it as founded on a just construction of the Constitution, and there is but one step more—and that not a long one—to be taken, to make the subjugation of the free States as complete as could be desired. Do you think that gentlemen who propose to call the roll of their slaves on Bunker Hill, will be long in discovering, after this, that it is not competent for a *State* to make laws in derogation of the Federal Constitution, and in violation, as it will be said, of the equal rights of the citizens of other States?"

And finally, in a speech on the Kansas-Lecompton Constitution, Jan. 7, 1858, Mr. Washburn said:

"If this be sound doctrine, it is plain that the Constitution carries Slavery not only into the Territories, but into the States, for whenever *it* makes property, no State law or Constitution can declare that it shall not be property."

(So that a vote, under *any* conditions, for admitting Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution, would be virtually voting "a Lecompton Constitution for the whole country.")

A number of Senators and Representatives, during the last session of Congress, expressed very nearly the same views. In the records of Congress we have found no disclaimer of the design, from any slaveholding Senator or Representative, nor any complaint that the position of the Administration was misrepresented on this point, or misunderstood.

INFLUENCE OF THE CLAIM ON REPUBLICANS.

If the great conspiracy against the liberties of the Free States was not wisely and boldly met—if it was not contended against on the only tenable and right ground, by our Republican Senators and Representatives, during the last session of Congress, it was not because the reality of that conspiracy was not perceived, nor because its full length and breadth and atrocity were not understood, nor because its success was not duly deprecated and feared. On the contrary, it would seem that the keen perception of the reality and extent of that conspiracy, along with the overwhelming apprehension and dread of its success, were among the causes that led them to abandon the ground they had selected, as a party, to stand upon, to submit to one more compromise, to part with the very last plank of their favorite platform, rather than run the risk of being out-voted by the conspirators. Thus indeed, by some of them, has their course been apologized for and explained. As "the least of two evils" they would rather relinquish their long-cherished enterprise of a Federal limitation of Slavery.

Whether they *could* have done otherwise? whether they *ought* to have done otherwise? are among the questions that present themselves.

Very plainly they could not have done otherwise, without recalling and reversing their oft-repeated concessions, their long-cherished theories, their admissions of the Constitutional right of Slavery in the Slave States, their pledges to refrain from interfering with it there. Adhering to *these*, they could not help giving up their principle of Federal restriction, for the two were incompatible with each other, and had been, from the beginning. Just as certainly as the President's doctrine of Constitutional Slavery in the *Territories*, carried along with it (as was shown by Messrs. Blair and Washburn) the resistless inference of Constitutional Slavery in the *States*, just so certainly did the Republican doctrine of Constitutional Slavery in *some* of the States carry along with it the resistless inference of Constitutional Slavery in *all* the States, and in the Territories besides. Retaining that theory, they could not have done otherwise than they did. Repudiating that theory, (if they could have had the sagacity, the magnanimity, and the courage to do so,) they might have stood firm. Denying the Constitutional rights of Slavery any where and every where, they might have consistently denied its rights in the Territories—its rights in Kansas, whether as a Territory or as a State.

The Congressional defense of freedom in Kansas failed, because its champions failed to defend freedom every where else, and consequently, *failed to defend it on principle*—the only defense that could avail. The defenses of freedom, in the so-called Free States, are in process of failing from the same cause. No reason can be given why freedom should be protected, either in Kansas or New-York, if not in "Georgia and South-Carolina."

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DONE.

The President's affirmation, that Slavery exists, under the Constitution, in Kansas as much as in Georgia or South-Carolina, should have been met promptly by the affirmation, that Freedom, not Slavery, under the Constitution, exists in Georgia and South-Carolina, and is to be protected by the Constitution there, the same as in Kansas and Ohio. The true issue of the controversy would then have been joined. The conspirators would have been check-mated and overwhelmed. One third of the Republican Senators and Representatives in Congress, by raising in good earnest *that* flag, might have killed the infamous Lecompton bill in twenty-four hours. Its supporters would have made haste to retreat. It is *Truth*, not *Numbers*, that achieves moral conquests; or, if numbers in a good cause be needed, nothing but truth and courage can inspire, enlist, and sustain them.

Admitting, for the argument's sake, that the Lecompton bill could have been passed in the face of an opposition of that character, its enactment would have been an abortion. The Free States would have been awakened to their true position. The Oligarchy would have trembled to its foundations.

In ancient times, it was a maxim that, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are as bold as a lion." In our day, the wicked succeed through their boldness, while those who would be thought the champions of righteousness, give up every thing, inch by inch, through timidity. They must needs so shape their course as to go with majorities, though by so doing they depart from the Truth, and yield up the very principles they had undertaken to defend.

THE KANSAS QUESTION IN 1858.

The bill for the admission of the STATE of Kansas into the Union under a Constitution known to be abhorrent to the majority of her people, and to have been rejected by them at the ballot-box,

a Constitution not only establishing Slavery, but declaring the right of slaveholding to be "before and higher than any Constitutional sanction," was nothing short of an open and direct attempt to force Slavery, by action of Congress, upon a Sovereign State, without its consent, and against its protestations. Upon the very face of the transaction, it was nothing less. This culmination of the claims of the Slave Power through the National Administration, its Executive, and its Cabinet, was reserved for the year 1858. It was an open abandonment of the previous profession of Federal non-interference with Slavery in the Territories, and of the doctrine, that the people of the Territories should determine their institutions for themselves. So notorious was this abandonment, that Senator Douglas, of Illinois, the father of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, deserted this measure of the Administration, and labored for its defeat, on that very ground.

It is humiliating to be obliged to record this climax of pro-Slavery aggression, on the part of a National Executive and Cabinet, under solemn oath to administer the Constitution for its declared ends—"to establish justice, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity." It is doubly humiliating to record, by the side of this climax of aggression, the climax of servility, concession, and compromise, on the part of those, in our national halls of legislation, who had been selected and sent there, as the champions of freedom. But it was a climax reached by the inevitable workings of the policy pursued by them for the last ten years, the policy of attempting to defend *some* portions of the country from a ruthless despotism, while yielding up *other* portions of the same country to its power; *denying* its constitutional authority in the *one* case, while *conceding* it in the other! By no possibility could any other ultimate result of such a policy have reached, whenever the final demands of Slavery should be pressed, as they were by the Lecompton bill.

EARLY SYMPTOMS OF COMPROMISE.

Even before the question on the passage of the Bill came to a vote in either House, there were indications that leading Republicans were preparing to relinquish, if hardly pressed, the main point for which the Republican party had been organized. So early as Dec. 29, 1857, the *N. Y. Tribune* said:

"All that we desire is, that Congress should wait until all the parties shall have been fairly heard, and then do with Kansas and her various Constitutions, *as the*

majority of her people shall have indicated as their choice. If that be the Lecompton Constitution, *so be it;* if a new Constitution, with or without an enabling act, very well; but if the Constitution drawn up at Topeka be the framework of Government under which a majority of the people of Kansas choose to come into the Union, who shall say them Nay? . . . . "The Nebraska struggle never hinged on the right of a Slaveholding and Slave-loving Territory to come into the Union, as a Slave State."

The whole history of that struggle contradicts this statement of the *Tribune*. The paragraph expressed a willingness to give up the very gist of that struggle. Previous to this, Dec. 16th, the *Tribune* had said:

"Our last advices report a full and frank conference between Senator Douglas and leading Republicans on the latest aspect of Kansas affairs. The results were mutually satisfactory."

It can hardly be supposed that Mr. Douglas would have been satisfied with the old Republican platform of 1856, which contended for a Federal exclusion of Slavery from the Territories. His course afterwards disagrees with this. On the other hand, it can hardly be supposed that there was, at that time, a mutual agreement on the basis of the Douglas platform, which was the same as that just quoted from the *Tribune*—yet it was afterwards assented to by the Republican vote in Congress, which will be seen as we proceed.

The *National Era*, in an elaborate article, Dec. 31, enumerated several wrongs inflicted by the Federal Administration upon Kansas, but made no mention of its having failed to abolish Slavery in that Territory. The Republican Philadelphia Platform of June 17, 1856, had distinctly proclaimed the Constitutional right and duty of Congress to prevent the deprivation of "life, liberty, and property" in the Territories, "without due process of law." But the *Era* now said:

"The doctrine that the Federal Constitution is self-extended to the Territories, is false, because that paper was made for the people of the United States, not Territories—applies to States, not Territories."

The *N. Y. Times*, whose editor, Lieut.-Gov. Raymond, was the penman of the Pittsburgh Address of that party, defining its position, in 1856, and who devoted his influential journal to the support of Col. Fremont, held the following language, March 9, 1858:

"Had the Slavery Constitution now urged upon Kansas been adopted by a majority of the people, upon a fair and regular vote, the North would make no opposition. Let us not be cited to the Abolition party. It is insignificant in numbers,

impracticable in spirit, and must always be without influence in national politics. We speak not for that powerless band of fanatics. But we repeat that the North will treat with fairness and liberality any new State which may hereafter present itself with a Slavery Constitution, adopted without fraud, and with the approval of a popular majority."

The leading Republican journals were searched in vain for protests against these sentiments of the *N. Y. Tribune*, the *National Era*, and the *N. Y. Times*.

NATURAL INFLUENCE OF THESE DECLARATIONS.

It would have been strange indeed, if the supporters of the Lecompton bill had lacked courage and perseverance, under influences like these! They saw in this, the success of the stratagem they had employed. They could hazard nothing by pressing the extent of their claims. The sorest defeat that could, at the worst, befall them, would be a temporary postponement of their demand for a Federal extension of Slavery over the States, (which they had hardly expected to carry at once,) with the fair prospect that, whether thus temporarily checked or not, their Republican opponents would be driven from their old platform of Federal restriction of Slavery, to the now deserted Cincinnati Platform of the Democratic party in 1856, against which they had so strenuously contended. Equally disastrous must have been the influence of the Republican journals upon Republican members of Congress. Invited and even pledged to a desertion of their principles, by some of those journals, and not encouraged nor incited to fidelity by the rest of them, they naturally took the course that seemed to be expected of them by their friends of the corps editorial. They but followed the course that had been pointed out for them, by those who might be supposed to echo the views of their constituents. The people thus unconsciously influence their legislators through the party presses they sustain by their patronage.

HOW THE LECOMPTON BILL WAS PASSED.

An amendment to the Lecompton bill was proposed in the Senate, by Mr. Crittenden, of Kentucky, providing that the Constitution be first submitted to the people of Kansas for their adoption or rejection. If adopted, the President was to admit Kansas into the Union by proclamation. If rejected, the people were authorized to call a Convention and form another Constitution. This amendment was rejected by the Senate by a vote of 34 to 24.

The original bill, admitting Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution, then passed the Senate, March 23, by a vote, 33 to 25. The Republican Senators, of course, voting against it. When the bill came before the House, Mr. Giddings, of Ohio, objected to the second reading. This raised the question, "*Shall the bill be rejected*"? The yeas were 95, all Republicans except three. Nays, 137. The Republicans were thus out-voted, *but not dishonored.* Up to this point, their votes were in harmony with their professions.

The question, "*Shall the bill pass?*" was yet to be acted upon. The 92 Republican members, alone, could not prevent its passage. On the other hand, the friends of the bill could not pass it, in the shape in which it came from the Senate, *or they would have done so.* Not all the 137 who voted against its rejection would consent to pass it, in that shape, nor probably enough of them to make a majority of the House, namely, 117. This seems to be proved by the fact that it was not done. The bill could only be passed by first engrafting upon it some such amendment as that offered by Mr. Crittenden in the Senate. This was proposed by Mr. Montgomery, a Democrat, from Pennsylvania. It was adopted by a vote of 120 to 112. The yeas included the 92 Republicans, along with 22 Democrats and 6 Americans. Of the nays, 104 were Democrats, and 8 were Americans. These 112 advocates of the original Senate bill were thus proved to be a minority of the House.

The Amendment having been made, the question recurred on the passage of the bill, as amended. The result we quote from the *N. Y. Tribune:*

"Yeas, one hundred and twenty; nays, one hundred and twelve. A vote to reconsider was laid on the table. The vote on *the passage of the bill* as amended, is the same as *on adopting the Crittenden amendment.*"

And so the Lecompton bill was passed by the votes of the 92 Republican Representatives. Had they not voted for the Amendment, the bill would not have been amended. And if it had not been amended, it could not have been passed, without a change of five votes in its favor, to add to its 112 original friends.

The Republican vote to amend was doubtless given through fear of the passage of the original Senate bill. And their vote to amend, had they not afterwards voted for the bill itself as amended, might perhaps have involved no direct abandonment of their principles. But their vote for the bill did. And the necessity for

doing it seems not apparent when the vote on the Amendment had shown only a minority in favor of the Senate bill. The fact seems to have been that there was a compromise made, in the dark, beforehand. The 22 Democrats and 6 Americans agreed to vote for the Amendment, on the condition and with the understanding that the Republicans should vote for the bill itself, when amended. And this was acceded to by the Republicans. The one party was thus secured from the danger of a defeat to the Lecompton bill altogether—the other was secured, as they supposed, from the danger of its passing in its worst shape.

But the expected benefits of this amicable communion of light with darkness, of Freedom with Belial, were not fully realized. The pro-slavery Senate would not ratify the compromise, and why should they? They had succeeded in bringing the Republican party down to their old cast-off Cincinnati platform, and could not afford to occupy it in company with them, having committed themselves to the coveted infamy of sinking down one grade lower. If they could not yet carry the Republicans with them fully, they could console themselves with the boast that they were but halting at one of their own favorite resting-places on the road. So the Senate non-concurred with the House.

It is interesting to notice, how, at this point of retrocession, the Republican position was regarded among themselves. Said the *New-York Tribune:*

"The journals in the interest of Buchanan and Lecompton are exultingly proclaiming that the anti-Lecompton members of Congress have conceded the main ground of dispute between them and their opponents, in adopting the Crittenden-Montgomery substitute, *and thereupon agreeing to the bill.* The *Herald** and its confederates ring the changes on this assertion, from day to day." . . . "Well, gentlemen, we call you to witness that the anti-Lecompton side of Congress has conceded all that can reasonably be required of them, yourselves being judges." . . . "WE TAKE YOUR LECOMPTON CONSTITUTION, ETERNAL SLAVERY AND ALL, provided the people of Kansas do not see fit to reject it, and form a new one instead." . . . "You say, gentlemen, that you do not expect to make Kansas a Slave State, you are only struggling for the abstract principle that a new slave State may come into the Union, provided there shall be one wanting to come in: HAVE YOU NOT YOUR ABSTRACTION IN THE CRITTENDEN BILL? Then why not accept it, and let Kansas cease to be a source of national agitation? Why not settle the question now?"

Thus, undeniably, did both parties understand that "the ab-

* The downward tendency of the Republican movement is incidentally illustrated by the fact that the *N. Y. Herald*, in 1856, took the lead of all other journals in the nomination of Fremont.

stract principle that a slave State may come into the Union" hereafter, was conceded by the Republican vote for the Crittenden-Lecompton Bill. But there was a good reason why "the journals in the interest of Buchanan" should not consent to the admission of Kansas as a free State, on any conditions. Their party was now pledged to the doctrine that the Constitution carries slavery into all the States and Territories; that the right to slaveholding is "before and higher than any constitutional sanction." If the Republicans could afford to compromise away their principles, the pro-slavery Democracy could not compromise away theirs. Or, if a minority of the Democrats in the House had done this, the majority of the party in both Houses were not bound by it. And when was the oligarchy ever bound or restrained by its own compromises? The struggle to force slavery upon Kansas was not to be relinquished, so long as its Free-State champions could make compromises.

The Senate would not concur with the House, but proposed a Committee of Conference, which was accepted. The result was the proposal of another pretended compromise, concocted by the Chairman, Mr. English, in which, while the Republicans were defrauded out of the price of their *previous* compromise, the ultra Lecompton party were subjected to no compromise of *their* "abstract principle" at all. By this bill, the people of Kansas were offered a bribe in the form of an appropriation of land. They were not allowed to vote *against* the Constitution at all, and only indirectly in its favor. They were only to vote for or against accepting the land. If they accepted it, the President was at once to proclaim Kansas a State in the Union, under the Lecompton Constitution. If they refused the land, Kansas was to remain a Territory under control of the Administration, until its population should increase to about one hundred thousand inhabitants. And, as no vote would have been taken to *reject* the Lecompton Constitution, there would be room left to contend (as has since been done) that it is the Constitution of Kansas still. This infamous "swindle" was passed, April 30, by a vote of 30 to 22 in the Senate, and 112 to 103 in the House, a number of "Douglass Democrats" voting in its favor. Thus were the Republicans abandoned by their seducers.

WHAT WAS GAINED BY THE COMPROMISE?

Hon. Joshua R. Giddings, of Ohio, the veteran Republican member of the House, in a letter published soon after, in the Wisconsin *Free Democrat*, said:

"There are few (Republican) members who do not now think it had been better to have stood firmly on the Republican position, and met the Lecompton fraud by a direct vote, than to have adopted the Compromise."

Said the New-York *Evening Post:*

"Even the acceptance of the Lecompton Constitution would have been preferable to this contemptible device of fraud and treachery."

Said the New-York *Tribune:*

"The original Lecompton bill had at least this merit—it assumed to be a finality. Kansas might reject or transform the Constitution thereby imposed upon her, but Congress was precluded from again meddling with the subject. But this English bill does not even pretend to be final. The strong probability is, that it will keep Kansas out at least two years longer."

Such were the testimonies of these and a score of other Republican journals, to the ill-success, as an expedient, of a line of policy they had contributed to inaugurate. Yet it does not cure them of their chronic habit of regarding themselves as *par excellence* "practical business men."

The policy was indeed lamentable enough. The main mischief was the abandonment of moral principle involved—the further demoralization of sentiment—the loss of what little, if any thing, was remaining, of a platform of "abstract principle" to stand upon for the future. After the first pangs of chagrin and disappointment were over, leading Republicans and their journalists, for the most part, fell back to a justification and laudation of the course that had been pursued. Not a few of them have come to plant themselves permanently on the principle first said to have been submitted to only as a temporary expedient. The process of exchanging the Republican platform of 1856 for the Democratic platform of the same date, has been steadily going forward. This arises in part from a gradual discovery of the fact that the mere "non-extension" experiment has been worked out, and has failed utterly. There is a growing consciousness that no large masses of enthusiastic and hopeful voters can ever be again rallied on *that* platform of national action, after its having once been compromised away, and relinquished.

In his speech at Chicago, July 9, Senator Douglas defended the foundation principle of his Kansas-Nebraska bill, and congratulated the assembled Democracy before him on the entire success of the principle in the disposal made in Congress of the Lecompton bill. He then said:

"My friends, while I devoted my best energies, all my energies, mental and physical, to the vindication of that great principle; and while its result has been

such as will enable that people to come into the Union, with such a Constitution as they desire, yet the credit of this great moral victory is to be divided among a large number of men of various and different political creeds. [Cheers.] I rejoiced when I found, in this great contest, the Republican party coming up manfully and sustaining the principle that the people of each Territory, when coming into the Union, had a right to decide for themselves whether Slavery should or should not exist within their limits.

"I had seen the time when that principle was controverted. I had seen the time when all parties did not recognize the right of the people to have Slavery or Freedom—to tolerate or prohibit Slavery as they chose—but this power was claimed for the Congress of the United States to the exclusion of the decision of the people of the Territory, and when I found upon the Crittenden-Montgomery bill, the Republicans and the Americans of the North joining with, and I may say, too, some glorious American and Old-Line Whigs from the South, [applause,] like Crittenden and Bell, [applause] when I saw these gentlemen uniting with a portion of the Democracy to carry out and vindicate the rights of the people, to decide whether Slavery should or should not exist within their limits, I was rejoiced within my secret soul, for I saw an indication that the American people, when they came to understand the principle, would give it their cordial support.

"The Crittenden bill was as fair, as perfect an exposition of the doctrine of Popular Sovereignty as could be carried out by any bill that man ever devised, and it proposed to refer the Lecompton Constitution back to the people of Kansas, with the right to accept it or reject it as they pleased, at a fair election to be held in pursuance of law."

This is but a specimen of the Democratic gratulations over the accession of the Republican party to their Cincinnati platform of 1856. The natural effect is, greatly to strengthen the faith of Democrats themselves, in the correctness of their principles, to confirm their wavering members, and to win new converts to their standard, from among the Republicans and Americans. The strong probability, to say the least, now is, that the Democratic platform of 1856, as expounded by Mr. Douglas, will be henceforth the creed of a large portion of those who have hitherto planted themselves upon the platform of mere Federal limitation and non-extension, unless they come up to the platform of this Society, and demand the Federal abolition of Slavery in the whole country, or, on the other hand, submit unresistingly to the new dogma of the Federal protection of Slavery in all the States.

STATE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

The effort for a "re-organization of parties" has already been commenced, and has been a topic of earnest debate in leading Republican journals. It seems to be the prevailing sentiment, that for the campaign of 1860 a new party will have to be organized,

though some are in favor of retaining the old name, and if possible, the old platform. While many are in favor of lowering down the standard below that of 1856, we have met with no proposal from any leading Republican statesman, politician, or editor, to raise it higher, though two or three local editors have favored it. The horde of office-holders and office-seekers, who commonly control the platforms and nominations of great parties, are evidently on the downward track. They have come to regard the opprobrium of being a "black Republican" as almost equally damaging with the name of "Free-Soiler," or "Abolitionist." Some are for getting up a great Protective Tariff party. Others are for nominating some popular man, without any platform of distinctive principles or measures. Some are for saying nothing on the slavery question; or, it is added, "If any platform is necessary, it is believed that the Crittenden Amendment will be found broad enough for the whole nation to stand upon," or, as the N. Y. *Evening Post* correctly translates it, broad enough "to meet the exigencies of office-seekers in every section of the Union." The *Post* is against a protective Tariff. The *Tribune* is in favor of it. H. C. Carey, the wealthy iron manufacturer of Philadelphia, is said to be in the movement. For a time the *Tribune* urged the Illinois Republicans to unite in the support of Mr. Douglas, but failing of success, it now joins in the war against him. It advocated fusion with the Americans in the New-York State election, but was overruled by the Convention. These, as characteristic specimens, may serve to show the uncertain condition of things in the Republican party, and what are the topics most on the minds of its leaders. Of the perils of the nation—of the best methods of meeting the alarming demands of the Slave Power—of the great constitutional question, upon which the alternatives of Freedom or Slavery, of Revolution or of constitutional reform are suspended, we hear little or nothing. Topics like these are not german to the present course of the Republican press—more than are the claims of the enslaved, and of the disfranchised people of color. Other objects engross them, such as: 'How can we get up the most popular issue with the Democrats, turn them out of office, and get in ourselves?' Professions of hostility to slavery are now couched in general terms without inconvenient specifications of particulars, while concessions in favor of slavery are exact, definite, and comprehensive. As for example:

"We war not on the right of any State to *establish* or maintain slavery, if it will."—N. Y. *Tribune*, June 17th.

"All that the Republicans ever asked for the people of Kansas was, that they should be permitted to elect their own legislators, and *enact their own laws*, and frame their own Constitution."*

In contrast with this, we refer to the following, from the Republican platform, adopted in 1856, by the Philadelphia Convention:

"No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." . . . . "Resolved, that it is our duty to maintain this provision of the Constitution, against all attempts to violate it, to *prevent* the establishment of slavery in the Territories of the United States, by positive legislation, *prohibiting its existence therein.*"

CONTRASTED BOLDNESS OF THE SLAVE POWER.

The Slave Power, in the mean time, emboldened at this relinquishment by the Republican party, of the right and duty of Congress to *prohibit* slavery in the Territories, advances, as might have been anticipated, a step farther, and now demands the *protection* of Slavery in the Territories, by act of Congress.

From the Charleston (S. C.) *News.*

"If the Constitution confers upon slavery the right to go there, [to the Territories,] as according to the Kansas-Nebraska bill and the Dred Scott decision it does, then it also imposes the duty of protecting that right, and *this can not be done without positive pro-slavery legislation and* A FEDERAL SLAVE CODE FOR THE TERRITORIES."

From the Richmond (Va.) *Enquirer.*

"The right of property in slaves in the *States* is now placed, practically as well as legally, beyond the reach of Federal legislative encroachment. But in the Ter-

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* The very day after this was penned, the N. Y. *Tribune*, Sept. 21st, expressed the opposite sentiment. It said:

"The Republicans are now urged from various quarters to surrender, or waive their demand that slavery be legally excluded from the Federal Territories, and take their stand, instead, upon the platform of popular sovereignty, so called—that is, of the right of the people inhabiting any Territory to establish or interdict slaveholding, as they shall think proper. We can not comply with this requisition, for these reasons," etc.

In the same article, however, the *Tribune* says:

"When a Territory throws off the Territorial condition, and forms a State Constitution, and applies for admission into the Union, she of course makes such a Constitution as she will, and is morally certain to be admitted with that Constitution. We may favor or resist her admission, but practically, and historically, we know that she will not be excluded because she is or is not slaveholding."

It might have been added that the Republican vote for the Crittenden-Lecompton bill guarantied this, and that the prospect of excluding slavery from Territories is equally hopeless. The vacillating course of leading Republican journals shows the unsettled state of the party. And it deserves notice that the *Tribune's* return to the old platform of its party comes after the nomination of Gerrit Smith.

ritories the case is different. It is not sufficient that the decision of the Supreme Court prevents Congress and all its delegates from the prohibition of slavery in a Territory. *There must be positive legislative enactment; a civil and criminal code for the protection of slave property in the Territories ought to be provided.*"

The *Charleston News* takes the same ground, and insists that this must constitute the issue of 1860. The New-York *Day-Book* responds in favor of the demand.

Nothing could be more natural than that since the idea of Federal legislation *against* slavery in the Territories is being relinquished, there should come up the idea of Federal legislation in *its favor*. When the nation's conscience is let down to the one, as it was by the Crittenden-Lecompton bill, it has reached its half-way-house to the other. The last compromise, like all the preceeding ones, became the stepping-stone for a fresh demand. The Territories are in fact, as well as in theory, under the government of Congress. And if Congress does not deny the right of holding slave property in the Territories, how can it get rid of protecting such property? How can it help doing either the one or the other?

NATURAL RELATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES.

The law of relation between the pro-slavery Democracy and the party of compromising, half-way opposition — by whatever name it may be called—seems to be this: The more audacious the outrage menaced by the pro-slavery Democracy, the more liberal the concessions of its pseudo-opponent; the more rapidly the one runs forward to occupy new posts, the more fleetly does the other, (the party of mere empty remonstrance,) like its shadow, run after it; the closer the one nears the precipice of national destruction, the closer does the other approximate toward the same perilous position; arriving, step by step, to-day, at the post held by its file-leader yesterday. When the one leaps the cataract, the other may be seen peering over the dizzy verge. While the one was clamoring for protection against the Abolitionists, the other answered: We will protect you, but give us "no more Slave States." When the one clutched at new Slave States, the other answered: Well, but allow us freedom in the Territories. When the one broke into new Territories, the other put in for an exception in the case of "territory once consecrated to freedom." When the one demanded that even these should be enslaved, the other responded: Not without leave first obtained of a majority of the "*white*" citi-

zens! When the one claimed the subjugation of the whole nation, the other imploringly answered: Please be contented with one half of it!

FINAL ABANDONMENT OF "NON-EXTENSION."

Such is the history of the "non-extension" enterprise of the last ten years. It ends in the giving up, inch by inch, of every rood of ground ever contended for. The entire claim of National limitation of Slavery, whether in States or Territories, (being the sum total of all that was contemplated or promised by the Free Soil and the Republican parties,) is now abandoned. The right of each State and Territory to exclude Slavery, (being all that the Republican party can now honestly profess to be contending for,) is a right that had never been questioned ten years ago, and never could have been questioned, but for the process of compromises, by which they have been driven to the wall. Only four years ago, *that* was the professed creed of the *Democratic* party, the sum total of its pretensions of non-subserviency to the Slave power. *There* Senator Douglas then stood; there he stands now. And the Republican party, if it stands any where, virtually stands there with him. When this Society, in a pamphlet issued in 1856,* pointed out the reasons for believing that the Republican party, *if in power*, could not, without rising higher, maintain the position it then claimed to hold, the argument was thought by many to be unsound, and the conclusion extravagant. But that party, though *not* loaded with the temptations of power, but under the more salutary influences that operate on minorities, has not maintained a higher position, but has, in many particulars, fallen below the estimate then made.

POSITION IN RESPECT TO THE SLAVE-TRADE.

Even in its relation to so monstrous a threat, and so imminent a danger as that of a Federal license to the African Slave-trade, a number of prominent leaders of the Republican party have not done better than in their relation to existing Slavery and Slavery extension at home. When the Administration, backed up by the Democratic Senators and Representatives, undertook to raise a storm of public indignation against pretended British outrages on our commerce, the real object notoriously was, to break up the British system of cruising against the African Slave-trade, preparatory

* The Kansas Struggle of 1856.

to an authorized revival, by our Government, of that infamous traffic. The ground taken against the right of visitation, to ascertain the nationality of suspected vessels, was in opposition to the settled usages of our own country, and of all other maritime nations. The claim set up, if submitted to and mutually reduced to practice, would render it impossible for the national armed vessels of this or any other nation ever to capture another slaver, or any other pirate, on the high seas. Never was there a movement of the Slave Power more imperiously demanding prompt exposure and sharp rebuke. *One* Republican Representative, Hon. Joshua R. Giddings, of Ohio, failed not, in despite of infirm health, and the noxious moral atmosphere around him, to discharge his duty, like an honest, earnest man. One other Republican Representative, A. G. Burlingham, of Massachusetts, with the three prominent Republican Senators, Messrs. Hale, Seward, and Wilson, took the opposite course. Instead of rebuking, or even calling in question, the course of the extreme Slavery party, they made indecent haste to join with, and, if possible, to outdo them, in what the New-York *Evening Post* justly characterized as their "game of bluster and brag." Scarcely had the Free North ceased giving expression to her alarm and indignation at this new onset of the Slave Power, before she was astonished to find her own chosen champions of liberty enlisted on the same side. To this hour, the phenomenon has never been satisfactorily, or even intelligibly, explained. The first excuse was, that it was a *ruse* to take the wind out of the Democratic sails—to satirize the movement by a mock advocacy of it. It was next said that it would not do to allow the Democracy to run away with all the glory of the patriotic outburst. The Republican party could not afford to bear the opprobrium of being backward to fight in the nation's defense, (in reality, the defense of the Slave-trade.) Then came the plea that this was the best way to kill the movement, by making it apparent that no party capital could be made out of it, since both parties were agreed. *Thus* did professedly Christian men trifle with the sin, and plead that it was only in sport, or a trick by which to accomplish desirable ends. Finally, a number of Republican journals, including the *National Era*, settled down upon a deliberate sober defense of the Administration itself in setting up the claim, and predicted that the Republican party would not be backward to help in maintaining it.

It is not, however, to be inferred that the Republican party is yet prepared, or that it will hereafter be, to consent to the reöpening

of the African slave-trade. Yet it can not be concealed that the path of her downward course, in that direction, has been more than half travelled within the last twelve months. Should the Administration within the next twelve or twenty-four months embroil the nation in a war with Great Britain in defense of the slave-trade, Republican speeches and editorials of the past year would be triumphantly quoted in defense of the policy. Should a bill for repealing our laws against the slave-trade be introduced, and need Republican votes for its passage, it would be natural for some Crittenden in the Senate, or Montgomery in the House, to propose, as an amendment, that those States that should duly signify their repugnance to receiving imported slaves, should be exempted from the annoyance. The same principles, the same policy, and the same pleas upon which the Republican vote for the Crittenden-Lecompton Bill is now justified, would equally justify a Republican vote for the African Slave-Trade Bill with such an amendment.

POSITION IN RESPECT TO STATE RIGHTS.

Nor is it in respect to *national* politics alone that the "Free Soil" and "Republican" parties have been "weighed in the balances and found wanting." In a number of the States, the one or the other, or both of those parties, have held, or now hold the political power, but in neither one of those States have "State Rights" been adequately vindicated against Federal aggressions instigated by the Slave Power. Wisconsin, a Republican State, has indeed distinguished herself by a judicial decision protecting a free white citizen from fines levied by the Federal Court for a violation of the Fugitive Slave Bill, and the decision has been, thus far, sustained. But in no State has adequate legal protection been provided for those seized, or in danger of being seized as fugitive slaves. The best specimen of a personal liberty bill yet enacted, is, perhaps, that of the Republican State of Vermont. Yet even that Act, by providing for a jury trial of persons seized, takes for granted the possibility of legal and Constitutional slavery in that State, and implies the obligation of giving up those who are really fugitive slaves. This defect arises from erroneous views of the Constitution, and of the legal tenure of slavery, which, if corrected, would require a corresponding change in the *national* politics of the party, especially a withdrawal of its concession of the Constitutional rights of slavery in the Slave States. Equally plain is it that the cherished honor of being denominated "the *white* man's party" would be forfeited by its extending equal civil and political immunities to the colored man.

THE END OF THE RACE.

It is interesting and, in a sense, satisfactory, to know that the double race of pro-slavery aggression and of corresponding compromise is well nigh finished and must soon terminate, there being nothing more to be claimed on the one hand, and little more to be relinquished on the other. New *shapes* of aggression may manifest themselves, but they can not go beyond, or be otherwise than subordinate to, the claim already set up—the claim that slavery is "before and higher than all Constitutional sanction," and must be protected by the Federal Government in the whole country. Further compromises, so called, may be made, but neither in a moral nor in a political view can they sink much lower than the level of the Crittenden-Lecompton Bill. And when it comes to be seen that there is necessarily an end to compromise, there may be a beginning of progress.

ENCOURAGING INDICATIONS.

Already there are signs of such a beginning. Thousands of Abolitionists who have permitted themselves to support the Republican party, under the mistake that it was, at least, the car of a gradual progress, are now waking up to the discovery that it has been rapidly carrying the cause backward. The inevitable disorganization and proposed reörganization of parties is making it necessary for them to inquire whither they are tending. In the State of New-York, the friends of freedom and of temperance have nominated GERRIT SMITH (the President of our Society) for Governor of the State. Decayed hopes are revived, enthusiasm is enkindled, and the prospects are brightening. In proportion to the magnitude of this movement will be its influence on the other States.

OTHER EVENTS.

Other events of importance to our cause have transpired within the past year, of which we can not speak in detail. The people of Kansas, in August, rejected the bribe offered in the "English" Bill by an overwhelming majority, as was universally anticipated beforehand. So little interest was manifested, either by Democrats or Republicans, by Pro-Slavery or Anti-Slavery journalists, that the fact was generally recorded in a brief paragraph, without comment—without triumph in the North or rage at the South.

This shows that Kansas was not saved by any action taken in Congress, but by the fact that her population consisted mainly of free emigrants from the non-slaveholding States, and were determined to exclude slavery whatever the action of the Government might be.

The capture of an American slaver by an American armed vessel was a remarkable event, and particularly so as coming so close on the heels of the outcry against British aggressions on account of such attempts. Lieutenant Maffit, of the U. S. brig Dolphin, gave chase to a vessel at first hoisting British colors—an exact counterpart to the "British aggressions" against which such an outcry had been raised. The suspected vessel proved to be an American, the Echo, *alias* the Gen. Putnam, Captain Townsend. It was captured, the slaves and crew landed at Charleston, and the Captain carried to Boston. The Administration, in accordance with the laws of the United States, have sent back the slaves to Africa, though it had been proposed at Charleston to distribute them among the planters.

The proceedings of the American Tract Society at its last annual meeting, in May, at New-York, in connection with its previous proceedings, was almost an exact counterpart of the recent proceedings in Congress. It was a contest between the thoroughly pro-slavery administration of that Society on the one hand, and the timid temporizing opponents of that administration on the other, resulting, of course, in the triumph of the party of slavery. At a previous meeting, a vote had been carried in favor of discussing, in the publications of the Society, "those moral duties which grow out of the existence of slavery, as well as those moral evils and vices which it is known to promote, and which are condemned in Scripture and so much deplored by evangelical Christians." This was thought to be a great step in advance. By the Publishing Committee some publications of that character had been prepared, but had been suppressed by them, in obedience to the demands of the slaveholders. This created great dissatisfaction, and a vigorous effort was now made to secure a reversal of that policy. But only a very few among these were ready to ask that the Society should publish against slaveholding itself, as sinful! The result was that the Report, which included an approbation of the course of the Publishing Committee, was adopted by a large majority of the annual meeting. Not only so. The meeting refused to adopt resolutions offered (1) for "reäffirming the resolutions of the previous year, and instructing the Executive Committee to carry the

same into effect;" (2) directing the publication of a tract "on the duties of masters according to the New Testament;" (3) directing that "nothing issued by the Publishing Committee should express or imply the Christian lawfulness of the system of American slavery;" (4) that the tract bearing upon the relation of master and slave, called "Sambo and Toney," (considered to be pro-slavery,) be stopped. And the old officers were reëlected.

Thus, as in Congress, was witnessed the downward course of things, under a policy that proposed only a gradual and partial amendment—a policy that waged war against the effects of the sin, without condemning the sin itself, without removing the cause of the evils deplored. The experiment in the Tract Society, like the experiment of the last ten years in Congress, has demonstrated that the power of Slavery only thrives the more under such treatment, that where the policy of moral compromise is admitted, aggressions and inroads are only multiplied, and the aggressions and compromises run an even race, till nothing further to be demanded or to be relinquished remains. In the Tract Society, as at the seat of Government, not the first step of real progress can be taken, till the existence of slavery itself is directly and uncompromisingly assailed. For the Church and for the Nation, there is but one remedy: repentance, and fruits meet for repentance.

OF THE OPERATIONS OF OUR SOCIETY

during the past year we have little of special interest to record. The financial embarassments of the times, with the backwardness of friends to contribute, have greatly embarrassed the Executive Committee, and crippled its powers. They hope for an improvement in the future, and earnestly ask the aid of the friends of the cause. They are encouraged to witness progress, even beyond the ordinary proportion to the pecuniary means employed. The discourse of Dr. Cheever, at our May Anniversary, published and circulated by our Committee, furnishes an instance in point. From various parts of the country, and particularly from the interior of this State, where nearly all the clergy have been gratuitously furnished with it, we hear the most encouraging reports. The circulation of "Our National Charters" continues, and is doing its work. Our little monthly sheet is still in the field, and will be changed into a weekly, *as soon as we have the means.* Our sale of books and pamphlets, though not large, is of great importance.

At a crisis like the present, it is lamentable to be doing so little

for the promotion of so noble a cause. The Committee earnestly entreat abolitionists to come up more vigorously to the work; to reassure themselves and take courage; to contribute; to labor; to be active; to be diligent, as in days past; to keep themselves well informed of the state of the cause; to realize the solemn obligations resting upon them, and discharge their duties to themselves, to posterity, to their country, to the slave, and to God.

There now remain no reasonable grounds for pleading in excuse for inactivity, that it is difficult to ascertain the right course to be pursued. The progress of events, under the Providence of God, is shutting up the friends of freedom to one course, the only one that now remains. The progress of light is, at the same time, illuminating our path. *Truth concerning the* CONSTITUTION is now operating in the whole country like leaven. Of this, evidences are accumulating daily. It may now be confidently and safely assumed, that *political action* against the Slave Power must from henceforth be carried forward, *if at all*, upon the principle of this Society, that Slavery is unconstitutional and illegal in the whole country, and must be treated as an outlaw and an enemy wherever it is found.